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PROPOSED MAYWOOD RIVER PARK PROJECT

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*Kerla — what's
scoop with car
involvement
at the site?
(follow up to
Esler Feldman
call).*

**Los Angeles County
California**

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PROPOSED MAYWOOD RIVER PARK PROJECT

*City of Maywood,
Los Angeles County, California
(At the intersection of East Slauson Avenue and the Los Angeles River)*

MAYWOOD RIVER PARK PROJECT

The proposed Maywood River Park would be a part of the 51-mile Los Angeles River Greenway, consisting of approximately five acres. The park would be located on the west bank of the Los Angeles River, where the river intersects with East Slauson Avenue in the City of Maywood. In an area presently used for manufacturing purposes and bordering on a residential neighborhood of low to moderate income families, the river park project would convert a concentration of industry into a vibrant public recreational area and important river access.

The creation of the river park is an important project for the City of Maywood (the "City") as well as the surrounding cities of Vernon, Bell Gardens, Bell and Huntington Park. The City of Maywood currently has only two parks (totaling 5.8 acres) for a population of approximately 30,000, well below the National Parks and Recreation Association minimum standard of six to ten acres of parkland for every 1,000 people. Particularly given the proximity of the proposed park site to a residential area, the project would benefit the entire population of Maywood, as well as that of other neighboring small cities which rely on the park facilities in Maywood for the recreational needs of their residents.

While planning and design of the park has not yet been officially started, the City's ideas for the park's uses include the creation of a venue for vocational training programs and anti-gang and at-risk youth programs, the establishment of river trail related businesses (such as bicycle and skate rentals and food concessions), and the restoration of natural river habitat, in addition to more traditional recreational uses such as the creation of a community soccer field.

The project has further significance to the larger Los Angeles County area as a step forward towards realizing the Los Angeles River Greenway. The Los Angeles River trail and bikeway currently extends for 20 miles beginning a few miles upstream from Maywood and continuing to the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach. This project would create an important river-side park and natural area along the existing trail and would help connect Maywood to the other cities along the Los Angeles River. Restoration of the natural river habitat would also be a part of the Maywood River Park project.

Many properties along the Los Angeles River have been in industrial use for decades. As the effort to reclaim the river as recreational and open space continues to strengthen, the Maywood River Park project would become a model up and down the river for positive re-use of industrial lands for productive recreational and community purposes.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Maywood is the most densely populated city in California, with a population of almost 30,000 residents in a 1.14 square mile of area. A majority of the Maywood population is young, with the median age of the city's residents being 24. With such demographics comes the clear need for recreational facilities. If successful, the Maywood River Park project will improve the quality of life for residents of the City of Maywood and the several surrounding cities by providing a badly-needed public recreational area in one of Los Angeles County's most park-poor regions. The Maywood River Park project has further significance as a potential major recreational access site to the Los Angeles River and, as such, would provide a unique outdoors experience to the local community and other users.

The river park could bring to the community new job opportunities, economic development and additional private investment related to the recreational use of the park and the Los Angeles River, as well as possible public funding for improved youth programs and job training which would be included in the park uses.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Maywood is working in coordination with the Trust for Public Land ("TPL") and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy ("SMMC") on the river park project, with TPL assisting with the real property acquisition and the SMMC assisting with the park design, development and administration. The City and other local governmental agencies are very enthusiastic about the river park project.

The City of Maywood is presently organizing a community advisory committee to be composed of a wide range of community leaders and organizations to work on the river park project. The local community advisory committee will include senior, youth, park and civic organizations, City residents, educators, members of the clergy, police officials, and other representatives of a cross-section of the community. The committee will evaluate the recreational needs of the City as well as neighboring cities and make recommendations to the City Council, and will participate in the planning process for the proposed park site.

In association with the effort to acquire and develop the target properties as a park, there will be a community outreach effort aimed at educating and involving the local neighborhood and Maywood residents regarding the park and related park development issues.



5050 East Slauson Avenue
*Southeast view of the site and LA Junction
rail line from across East Slauson Avenue*



5050 East Slauson Avenue
Northeast view from along 59th Street



5050 East Slauson Avenue
*Southwest view of the site from
across East Slauson Avenue*



5920 Alamo Avenue
*Northeast view from intersection of
Alamo Avenue and 59th Street*



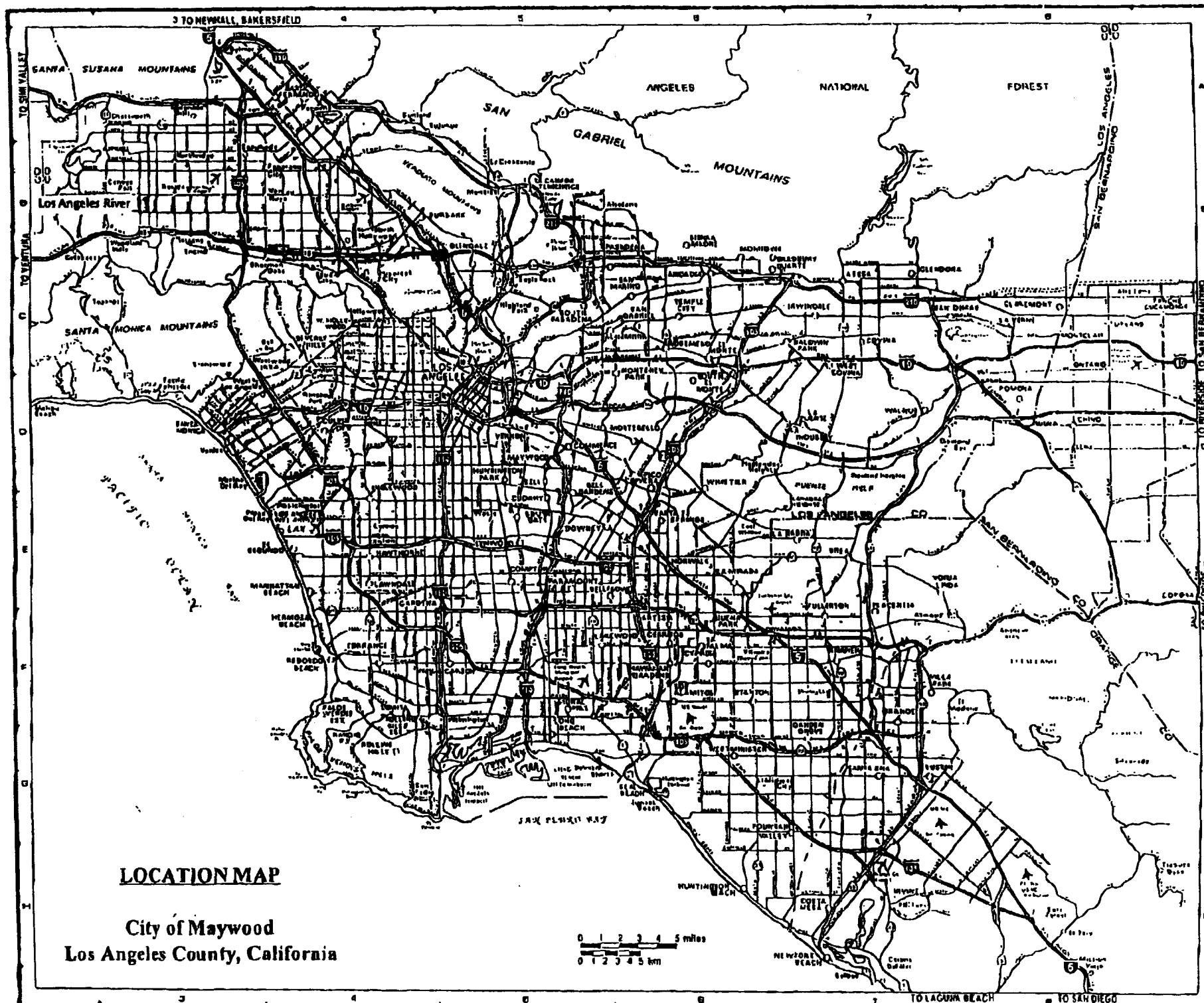
5920 Alamo Avenue
*Northwest view from
railroad crossing and 59th Street*



5950 Walker Avenue
Vacant property at the northeast corner
of Walker Avenue and 60th Street



L.A. Junction Railroad
*Segment of railroad line between
East Slauson Avenue and 59th Street*



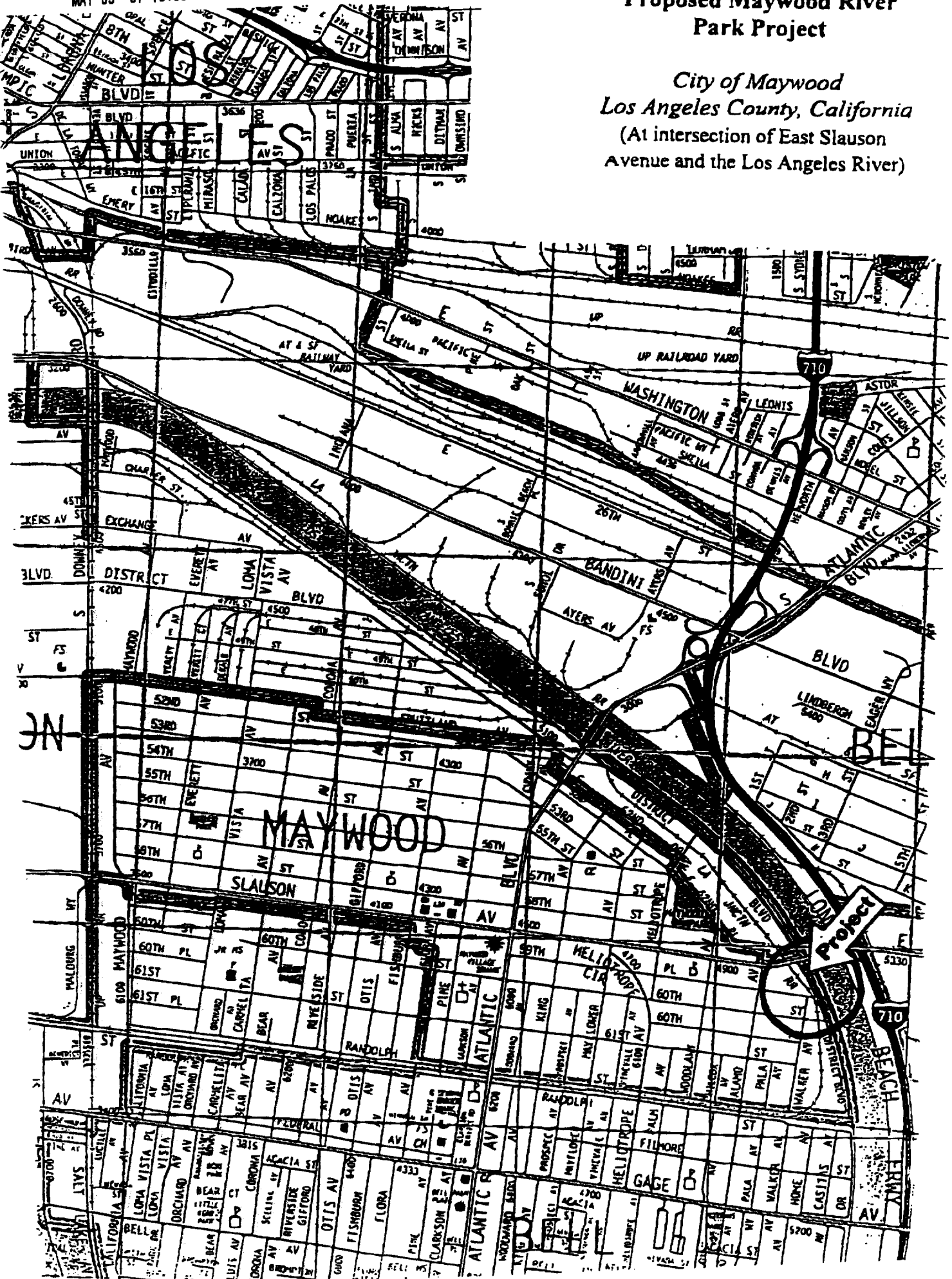
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Proposed Maywood River Park Project

City of Maywood
Los Angeles County, California
(At intersection of East Slauson
Avenue and the Los Angeles River)



TRACT NO. 7923
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Conserving Land
for People

THE LOS ANGELES RIVER GREENWAY

Los Angeles River Greenway Description

One of the most promising efforts underway in Los Angeles County today is the transformation of the Los Angeles River from a forgotten concrete channel into a usable and attractive river greenway. The Los Angeles River Greenway will be a network of parks, trails, natural areas and community spaces all along the river's 51-mile length. The river flows through 13 cities, home to over 8 million people, on its journey from the river's beginning in the hills west of the San Fernando Valley to its end at the Pacific Ocean in Long Beach.

1930's Vision for River Comes to Life

Today's Los Angeles River Greenway is modeled after the original 1930's design for the river, which called for creation of parks and green spaces all along the river's banks. The designers of this plan were the Olmsted brothers, famous for urban park design throughout the nation, including our State Park system. Today the Los Angeles River Greenway is finally on its way to becoming the national urban landmark they envisioned.

Public Agencies & Private Organizations in Partnership

Partnerships of public agencies, non-profit organizations and community groups are actively working to plan and create a corridor of natural river habitat, park, recreation and trail facilities and river-related economic developments all along the Los Angeles River. As the Greenway comes to life through the development of parks and natural areas in each of these communities, it will help promote economic vitality as well as provide badly-needed recreational opportunities in our most park-poor, densely populated areas of Los Angeles County.

New Park Lands to Connect Communities and Provide Public Access

The Trust for Public Land is working with private landowners, local communities and public agencies to acquire lands for parks and recreational use all along the river's length, and to connect existing parks and trails along the Greenway. These new parks will become important links in the Greenway, providing public access points, recreational opportunities and natural river habitat. Purchase of new lands is essential to connect the river's three main stretches: San Fernando Valley to Griffith Park; Griffith Park / Elysian Park to Downtown; and the southern section stretch from Vernon to Long Beach.

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Making Brownfields Bloom



By Carl Anthony

Illustration by
Darrel Kolosta

Abandoned lands in the inner
city can be reclaimed—
but the process must involve
local communities.

Inappropriate growth is wreaking havoc on America—particularly on America's cities and their people. As more affluent people abandon the inner cities, suburban sprawl is gobbling up wilderness and farmland. Industry, too, is fleeing the urban core in many places, seeking lower taxes and labor costs, leaving behind derelict buildings and contaminated lots. The social and economic effects on cities of this growth pattern are devastating. Cities lose jobs and taxes; urban people lose jobs nearby and find it difficult to reach distant work sites where the jobs have moved to. The worsening cycle of abandonment and unemployment reinforces racial prejudice and prompts further white flight from the urban core.

"Brownfields" is the name adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to describe the most visible sign of urban abandonment.

The term highlights the

difference between these derelict buildings and contaminated city lots and the green fields and farmland of the urban edge. Although no national inventory of brownfield sites has been completed, a 1995 report by the United States General Accounting Office estimated the number of contaminated urban sites at between 130,000 and 425,000. In Chicago, eighteen percent of once-productive industrial land now sits idle and unused. In Boston, the one-and-a-half-square-mile Dudley Street neighborhood alone contains fifty-four hazardous waste sites. Philadelphia contains 15,800 vacant lots and 21,000 vacant buildings, according to Neal R. Peirce, a nationally syndicated columnist.

FOR THE RECORD

Acknowledging the scale of the problem, the U.S. Conference of Mayors recently proclaimed vacant buildings and contaminated properties the number one environmental challenge for urban areas. In January 1995 the EPA announced the Brownfield Economic Redevelopment Initiative, which will fund fifty pilot clean-up programs. The grants of \$200,000 for two years seek to "empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic development to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and reuse brownfields."

But more than thirty years of experience suggests that government programs can succeed only if they are adequately funded, carefully targeted, and attentive to the needs and views of inner-city residents. Much of the money from federal Model Cities and community development block-grant programs of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s was siphoned off for downtown convention centers and similar projects, leaving behind struggling neighborhoods and industrial areas suffering from redlining and other forms of disinvestment. Moreover, funding for these programs fell far short of public subsidies to suburban areas over the same period. These included tax write-offs, mortgage assistance, and grants for highway, sewage, and other infrastructure construction.

The new brownfields initiative, and similar programs, may offer real hope for reclaiming abandoned urban lands and turning them into productive, community-serving places. It's a step in the right direction. But in order to make a real difference in the lives of inner-city residents, this and related programs must learn to operate on a human scale, respond to real human needs and neighborhood dynamics.

A LITTLE HELP FROM THEIR FRIENDS

I first helped reclaim an abandoned inner-city property almost thirty-five years ago. Twenty-three years old, I was a coordinator for a civil rights project that offered tutoring to Harlem youngsters and organized campaigns

for jobs and better housing. After a survey of Harlem's vacant and underutilized land, we found a promising site with two vacant lots and a large area surrounded by five-story tenements. This enclosed space was partitioned by dilapidated fences and littered with old furniture, appliances, automobile tires, and rat-chewed garbage.

Our goal was to create a demonstration project to

show what neighborhoods could do with a little help from their friends. First we surveyed the block's residents for their ideas on how the space might be rehabilitated.

Next we approached a dozen landlords, who leased us their property for \$1 per year and allowed us to tear down the fences. Lloyds of London contributed property and liability insurance for the project. Neighborhood residents hauled away the trash, and volunteer architects designed play spaces, sitting areas, and a barbecue pit. We set up an office in a vacant apartment and a study area in a building basement. Each week seventy-five college students would visit the new space to tutor neighborhood youngsters in math, science, and English.

Of course, this property was not called a "brownfield," and the process we went through was not what comes to mind when we discuss "brownfield rehabilitation." Today the process is dominated by real estate professionals, lenders, investors, developers, and corporations. Commercial and legal language dominates the dialogue. The talk is of prospective purchaser agreements, presumptive remedy guidance, risk management, potential lender liability, fiduciary protection, securitization of transactions, and incentives for developers. By contrast, the Harlem residents I worked with in 1962 were motivated by the simple prospect of eliminating garbage from their back yards and creating a safe place for their children. Their vocabulary of rehabilitation included words like freedom, justice, hope, and self-reliance.

The difference in language highlights the crucial importance of seeking resident participation in decisions on

NEW NONPROFIT FOCUSES ON BROWNFIELDS

In June TPL and the James Irvine Foundation announced the formation of the nation's first nonprofit organization of its kind devoted to the redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized land in urban areas. The California Center for Land Recycling (CCLR, or "see clear") will identify brownfields in that state and encourage their reuse in ways that support economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health. Recent regulatory changes by federal and California state environmental protection agencies have made thousands of these sometimes-contaminated sites available for reuse, even as new technology has emerged for their clean-up. Because brownfield sites are already served by transportation, utilities, schools, and roads,

it is often cheaper to redevelop them than it is to develop new land. Appropriate reuse of brownfields is a key way to reinvigorate city neighborhoods while containing urban sprawl. Potential uses include not only business or light industry but also housing, community gardens, parks, and open space. Begun with the help of a three-year, \$2 million grant from the James Irvine Foundation, the California Center for Land Recycling will be run initially from TPL's Western Regional Office and serve as a clearinghouse for information on brownfields redevelopment. The center's staff will function primarily as educators, facilitators, and collaborators, bringing together the community members, government agencies, and financial institutions necessary to make brownfields projects work.

brownfield renewal. Developers think of land primarily as a commodity. When they speak of "risk" they refer to profit and loss—the bottom line. Poor people describe their neighborhoods using the language of life. Risk for them is risk to persons, not profit.

HEALTHY LAND FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

For brownfield renewal projects to succeed, those involved must understand that beyond its commodity value, land serves as a vital support for healthy communities. People in our society take for granted that land should be bought and sold like a refrigerator, car, or television set. But while a person can get along without a car or television set, no one can live without access to land, since everyone must live and work somewhere. Even persons who do not own land require such land-based necessities as shelter, privacy, a workplace, a community, a place to shop, and access to the natural world.

To be sure, some projects should seek profit for private developers. Rehabilitation should also seek to protect public health, strengthen the tax base, eliminate ugliness, and create jobs. But perhaps the most important opportunity in brownfields rehabilitation is the

chance to build a better society while reclaiming and recycling vacant urban land with the full participation of inner-city residents.

Fulfilling this goal will require an expanded dialogue between experts and ordinary citizens on such topics as urban agriculture, open space and parks, housing, transportation, and jobs. Such a dialogue could renew our vision of citizenship and community and nurture a new generation of urban leaders, while improving the public perception of inner-city neighborhoods. Maybe then we can rediscover the path toward a racially just society first explored in the early 1960s. Finally, we must meet the many needs—for funds, space, knowledge, skills, time, human networks, and access to natural resources—of those who have borne the burden of urban abandonment for so long.

Carl Anthony is an urban planner, architect, and environmental justice advocate. President of Earth Island Institute and director of its Urban Habitat Program, he brings together diverse constituencies to work on problems facing urban and nonurban communities in the renewal of the human and natural landscape. Carl is a member of TPL's National Advisory Council.